

PAYMENT OF ONE-HALF OF CONSTRUCTION OF BRIDGE
ACROSS THE SAN JUAN RIVER, N. MEX.

JANUARY 16, 1925.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the
state of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. MORROW, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, submitted the
following

REPORT

[To accompany S. 1665]

The Committee on Indian Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (S. 1665) to provide for the payment of one-half the cost of the construction of a bridge across the San Juan River, N. Mex., having considered the same report thereon with a recommendation that it do pass with the following amendments:

Page 1, line 3, after the word "hereby," insert the words "authorized to be."

Page 1, line 9, after the word "bridge," insert the following: "and to be reimbursable to the United States from any funds now or hereafter placed in the Treasury to the credit of the Navajo Indians, to remain a charge and lien upon the funds of such Indians until paid."

The Secretary of the Interior has recommended this legislation, and the facts are fully set forth in the letter from him under date of January 15, 1924, which is appended hereto and made a part of this report.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, January 15, 1924.

Hon. J. W. HARRELD,
Chairman Committee on Indian Affairs,
United States Senate.

MY DEAR SENATOR HARRELD: This will refer further to your letter of January 4, transmitting for report and recommendation a copy of S. 1665, proposing an appropriation of \$6,620 to defray one-half the cost of the construction of a bridge across the San Juan River near Bloomfield, N. Mex. This bill is identical with S. 3279, introduced during the last session of Congress but which was not enacted into law. I recommend that S. 1665 receive the favorable consideration of your committee and of Congress.

It is the intention that this bridge shall be erected across the San Juan River near Bloomfield, N. Mex., to replace one that was destroyed by high water several years ago. The bridge will serve about 800 Navajo Indians living on the public domain in that part of the State, there being at the present time no bridge across the river nearer than Farmington. The county has deeded to the Government the site of the proposed bridge, which will cost approximately \$13,240. The county, however, is unable to defray the entire cost of the bridge. In view of the fact that the bridge will be of approximately equal benefit to the Indians and the whites, I believe that the Government would be justified in paying one-half the cost. In a decision dated June 17, 1921, the Comptroller of the Treasury ruled that no aid could be extended in the construction of this bridge without a specific appropriation by Congress, in view of section 3733, Revised Statutes, which provides:

"No contract shall be entered into for the erection, repair, or furnishing of any public building or for any public improvement which shall bind the Government to pay a larger sum of money than the amount in the Treasury appropriated for the specific purpose."

The bridge in question is held to be a public improvement; therefore a specific appropriation will be necessary to defray any portion of the cost thereof.

Very truly yours,

HUBERT WORK, *Secretary.*